



My Sight Nottinghamshire

Annual Review 2024 - 2025

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Introduction

Welcome to My Sight Nottinghamshire's 2024 - 2025 Impact Report.

Over the past year, we have continued to strengthen our resources while delivering vital services to people living with sight loss across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.

Despite our efforts, people with sight loss still face significant barriers in their everyday lives. Sight loss affects nearly every aspect of a person's well-being - from independence and mobility to mental health, social interaction, education, employment and financial stability. Many of our clients continue to experience deep-rooted inequalities and discrimination, particularly in accessing healthcare, education, job opportunities, housing and transport.

According to the RNIB's Sight Loss Data Tool, just under 6,000 people in Nottinghamshire are officially registered as having a visual impairment. However, it is estimated that 38,000 people are actually living with some degree of sight loss - a figure expected to double by 2050.

The financial pressures facing Nottingham City Council's has impacted on the capacity of their sensory team and changes within national sight loss and other charities have further affected support available in our communities.

Loneliness and isolation are massive barriers for people with sight loss but services to address this have reduced significantly across the charity sector over the last two years. Further reduction in community support is expected throughout 2025/2026.

In response to these external pressures (and following our own internal reorganisation), My Sight Nottinghamshire has seen a dramatic 138% increase in referrals, demonstrating the growing need for our services.

**% increase in
referrals to My
Sight Notts
services in
2024 - 2025:**

138%

Our services

How we address the need

Supporting Independence

Providing early intervention for people awaiting rehabilitation and mobility training
Information and advice on daily living and independent living skills
Providing low vision assessments
Providing sight loss advice on assistive equipment and tech solutions
Support to build skills and confidence to move nearer to and into employment

Emotional Support

Shared Vision - a four-day course providing a space to understand practical solutions as well as a space to talk and share experiences with others going through the same thing. Shared Vision will support people through the stages of grieving, depression and anxiety associated with sight loss
Peer support - providing a range of activities of peer support including social groups, coffee mornings, walking groups and shared emotional support
Eye Clinic Liaison Officer (ECLO) - based in the Macular Clinic at Queens Medical Centre, our ECLO supports people when newly diagnosed with sight loss
Counselling – we provide placements for counselling and psychotherapy students that can offer one to one support

Creating Social Connections

Our social groups and coffee mornings meet in five locations across Nottinghamshire, providing a range of peer support activities
Talking News is an audio service for local news, quizzes, what's on guides and much more. Delivered across the county by USB or digital download.
Physical activities including walking, rambling, swimming, gym sessions, Boccia and chair-based exercise
Arts and cultural activities- our choir practices weekly and attends events across the county; Working in partnership with other organisations such as Nottingham Trent University, to look at making arts and cultural activities accessible for people with sight loss.



2024 - 2025

A Year in Numbers

1170

people supported by
our ECLO

183

people supported with
sight loss advice

344

people accessed
social activities

156

people accessed
emotional support and
counselling

607

sight loss advice
appointments

48

people supported to
gain employment or
stay in employment

108

people trained in sight
loss awareness

123

Amazing volunteers
supported our work

1040

Approximatel cups of
coffee served at our
coffee mornings

2928

Approximate miles
walked by our
Rambling and Walkie
Talkie Wednesday
groups

1260

Number of bump ons
sold

750

Songs sung by our
choir

Our Achievements

Partnership with Local Hospitals

We have been working in partnership with two local hospital eye clinics - Queen's Medical Centre in Nottingham and King's Mill Hospital in Mansfield - to deliver sight loss awareness training and carry out accessibility audits.

A key outcome of this collaboration was a significant improvement in signage at King's Mill Hospital. Previously, the signs were small, difficult to read and visually blended into their surroundings, creating challenges for patients trying to navigate around. Following our input and recommendations, the hospital implemented new signage that is significantly larger, features high-contrast colours (black text on a yellow background) and provides much clearer directions to the eye clinics.

Sight Loss Awareness and AR Headsets

One of our short-term objectives is to offer accredited sight loss awareness training. In 2024/2025, we made significant progress toward this goal through the acquisition of augmented reality (AR) headsets, funded by the BNA. These headsets simulate a range of eye conditions, also allowing us to layer different conditions so that users can gain a deeper, more immersive understanding of what it is like to live with sight loss.

Advice Guides

Staff have been instrumental in developing a series of advice guides to support people living with sight loss. The guides offer practical information across a range of topics:

- **Assistive Technology Guide** – exploring tech solutions that can support daily living including virtual assistants, navigation apps and accessibility features on devices.
- **Adjusting & Adapting the Workplace** – offering guidance on Access to Work support, occupational therapy and health assessments; incorporating assistive technology and equipment to create an inclusive work environment.
- **Shared Vision Resource Pack** – A comprehensive guide covering all aspects of living with sight loss.

These guides provide the information needed to lead independent and fulfilling lives. You can find them on our website.



Nottingham Light Night

My Sight Notts partnered with It's in Nottingham, Nottingham Meanderers and the Nottingham Deaf Society to deliver accessible guided tours of Nottingham Light Night. This annual city-wide celebration showcases a variety of light-based art installations. We recognise that many individuals with sight loss find it particularly challenging to navigate safely at night, so we wanted to make this event more inclusive and accessible.

We planned and facilitated two guided tours featuring four of the main installations. The tours were co-produced with Maggie Anguish, one of our dedicated members, ensuring that the experience was shaped by lived experience. Starting from My Sight Notts, participants were guided through the city centre to key installations and at each stop, where they were provided with props that captured the essence of the artwork, offering a multisensory experience that brought the event to life.



My VisAbility Employment Service

In 2023, we were awarded funding by the Thomas Pocklington Trust to pilot an employment programme (called Works for Me) aimed at helping individuals with sight loss build the skills and confidence needed to move closer to employment. Although this initial funding concluded in September 2024, the positive feedback we received highlighted the value and impact of the service.

We successfully secured additional funding from the National Lottery Community Fund, which has enabled us to continue delivering employment support (along with other services). Now rebranded as MyVisability, the programme remains focused on empowering individuals to progress towards, or into, meaningful employment opportunities.

Outcomes

Outcomes are the changes and differences our services make to the lives of people with sight loss. In 2024 - 2025 we supported:

64% of people with sight loss to feel more independent

78% of people with sight loss to have better understanding of their eye condition

96% of people with sight loss to make the best use of their sight

61% of people with sight loss to feel better physically and mentally

69% of people with sight loss to feel less isolated and lonely

How We Measure Outcomes

The Sight Loss MOT is an outcome measurement and assessment tool looking at eight areas of a person's life including understanding your eye condition; making the best use of your sight; health and wellbeing; managing at home; getting out and about; finances and planning for the future; work, learning and having your say and having someone to talk to.

Consulting with our service users plays a central role in shaping and improving the services we offer at My Sight Notts. We believe that by actively involving the people who use our services, we can better understand their needs and create solutions that truly make a difference in their lives. This ensures the people we support are at the heart of our decision making and ensures that our services are relevant, effective and responsive to the needs of those we support.

Our Impact - Olubukola's Story

Olubukola Adimula (Olu) came to the UK on a student visa from Nigeria to pursue higher education. Unfortunately, her vision deteriorated due to Glaucoma, forcing her to withdraw from her course. She lost her student visa and found herself in a precarious and vulnerable position.

Returning to Nigeria was not an option for Olu. As a masculine gay woman, she feared persecution under the country's strict anti-LGBTQ+ laws and the archaic views of disability. She therefore sought asylum in the UK, citing both her sexuality and her disability as grounds for protection.

Challenges

Olu's journey was fraught with difficulties:

- Losing her visa status meant Olu had to apply for asylum, a process that is both uncertain and slow. Before her application, she was unable to work and had no access to regular income, which led to unstable housing.
- Progressive Vision Loss - Olu's Glaucoma continued to worsen, affecting her ability to complete daily tasks. Without access to visual aids or training, Olu struggled with independence and digital communication.
- Financial Hardship and Risk of Homelessness - with no income and limited support, Olu fell behind on rent and faced the threat of eviction. The stress of financial instability further impacted her wellbeing.
- Isolation and Navigational Barriers - navigating an unfamiliar welfare and asylum system left Olu feeling isolated and overwhelmed. The fear of deportation and her lack of a support network compounded her anxiety.

Support and Intervention

Our team worked closely with Olu to help her rebuild her confidence and regain her independence through:

Emotional Support and Confidence Building:

One-to-one counselling helped Olu to begin to come to terms with her situation. We focused on rebuilding her self-esteem; her identify her strengths and prepare her emotionally for the next steps.

Accessibility Tools and Training: We gave Olu the skills and tools to enable her to use her phone and computer independently, restoring her ability to communicate, access information and manage daily tasks more easily.

Asylum Process Guidance: We supported Olu to engage with the Nottinghamshire Refugee Forum and accompanied her to the Home Office centre in Sheffield, where she was officially registered as an asylum seeker and granted the right to work.

Employment Preparation: Once eligible to work, we helped Olu update her CV, explore job opportunities and develop confidence in job applications and interviews.

Housing and Financial Stability: Olu secured more stable accommodation and reached a repayment plan with her former landlord, avoiding legal consequences and reducing immediate stress.

Positive Impact

With our consistent, tailored support, Olu secured a role as a Support Worker. Reasonable adjustments based on our recommendations were made, including screen magnification software. The job has brought her financial security and a renewed sense of purpose.

Olu's asylum claim was recently approved and she has been granted refugee status, allowing her to live and work in the UK for five years, after which she can apply for citizenship. She is now in a new relationship and optimistic about the future.

Conclusion

Through practical tools, legal guidance, emotional care and employment assistance, Olu has transformed her life from fear and uncertainty to stability and hope. This case illustrates how tailored, person-centred support can impact individuals with visual impairments facing complex challenges to thrive.

What We Have Learned

As outlined in the introduction, My Sight Notts has experienced a significant increase in referrals, with a 138% rise compared to 2023–2024 and a 300% increase compared to 2022–2023. This growth is attributed to several factors, including the restructuring of our services department in 2023 and the reduction in support available from local authority teams and other charitable organisations.

This surge in demand has raised important questions about our capacity to respond effectively, particularly given that My Sight Notts is not designed to operate as a crisis service.

Recognising these challenges and acknowledging that despite limited external resources, there are still other organisations capable of providing meaningful support - enables us to better coordinate a comprehensive package of care. This ensures that individuals with sight loss receive appropriate assistance both prior to and during their engagement with My Sight Notts.



Looking Forward to 2025 - 2026

Services for Children, Young People and their Families

Over the coming year, we are embarking on the development of targeted services for children, young people and their families.

One of our key projects currently in development is an accessible gaming initiative. This innovative programme is designed to provide children and young people with sight loss, the opportunity to engage in inclusive, adaptive gaming experiences. Through this project, we aim to create a safe and supportive environment where participants can explore technology, build confidence and connect with peers through the medium of gaming.

In addition, we are in the process of establishing a dedicated support group for parents and carers. Recognising the vital role that families play in the lives of children and young people, this group will serve as a space for connection, shared learning and mutual support. We are exploring opportunities of working with organisations across Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Leicestershire, to reach a wider network of families who may benefit from additional guidance, resources and peer engagement.

Enhancing Collaboration with NHS Partners

2025 - 2026 will see us working to enhance partnerships with local NHS trusts. A key priority will be identifying better ways of working collaboratively to improve outcomes for the people we support.

This includes working with the Local Eye Health Professional Network, who are producing a new Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA). This will involve individuals living with sight loss, ensuring their voices help shape the planning and delivery of eye health services. Feedback from our members consistently shows that many feel inadequately informed about the full range of support, rehabilitation and benefits available after diagnosis.

Over the coming year, we will continue working with NHS partners to build a more informed system of care that puts people with sight loss at the centre of planning and improvement.



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Nottinghamshire County Council
NPC
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We would also like to say a massive thank you to all our wonderful volunteers for donating their time and making a huge difference to the lives of the people we support.

Thank you to everyone that continues to donate their time and money.



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